

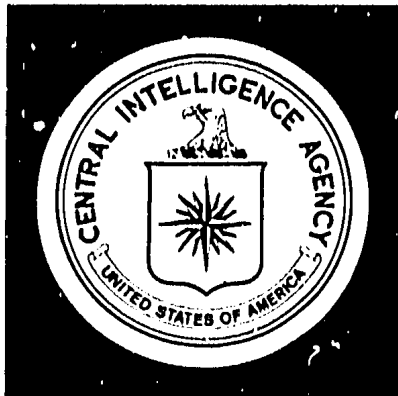
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## *Developments in Indochina*

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## *Developments in Indochina*



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NORTH VIETNAM . . . . . 1

Pham Van Dong will soon lead a delegation  
to North Korea and Mongolia. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Pham Van  
Dong will also visit Eastern Europe and may  
stop in Africa and Cuba. Presumably a trip  
to the USSR is also in the offing.

SOUTH VIETNAM . . . . . 3

It is very difficult to determine how many  
members of the Viet Cong's political infra-  
structure are now operating in the South.  
The South Vietnamese estimate between 45,000  
and 50,000; CIA estimates between 55,000 and  
70,000. VCI strength has fluctuated greatly  
since late 1970, but there are numerous indi-  
cations that the Communists feel politically  
weak at this time. The rebuilding process  
will not be short or easy. President Thieu  
seems likely soon to get firm control over  
the Senate, the only official body in which  
his non-Communist opponents now have con-  
siderable strength. The country's main  
independent opposition groups are sitting  
out the coming election, convinced they have  
no chance against Thieu's well-organized

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machinery. With a strong majority in the Senate, he expects to be able to push through certain constitutional amendments

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that would strengthen him politically. There were some last-minute efforts to improve local positions as the new cease-fire went into effect, but neither side attempted a major land-grabbing campaign.

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CAMBODIA . . . . . 7

Phnom Penh's students and teachers, who protested government economic policies and poor living conditions early this year, are now lying low, still feeling the affects of the political crackdown that followed the bombing attempt on Lon Nol's residence. Some students and leaders were then arrested, others went into hiding, and still others fled to the insurgents. The leaders are still badly divided and demoralized; the students have adopted a "wait and see" attitude toward the government.

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NORTH VIETNAM

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Hanoi's Leaders To Go on Tour

Premier Pham Van Dong will visit North Korea and Mongolia soon at the head of a party and government delegation, and National Assembly Chairman Truong Chinh may visit Japan later this year.

The exact dates of Pham Van Dong's tour were not announced, but Ulan Bator has stated publicly that he will be in Mongolia in late June. The trip apparently will fulfill a directive in Ho Chi Minh's will that all of the countries that aided Hanoi during the war be thanked personally. Pham Van Dong reportedly will also visit Eastern Europe, and possibly Africa and Cuba. Presumably, he will stop in Moscow for talks, at least in part to balance off the recent visit by Dong and Le Duan to Peking.

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SOUTH VIETNAM

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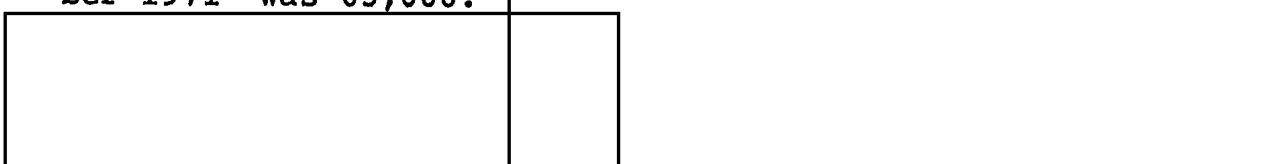
How Strong the VCI?



Estimates as to how many members of the Viet Cong's political "infrastructure"--the VCI--are now operating in the South vary widely. The last official estimate by the US military command--in December 1971--was 65,000.

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The South Vietnamese government's Phuong Hoang Committee, operating under the guidance of the National Police, can identify only 26,000 active VCI and estimates total strength at between 45,000 and 50,000. CIA analysts, on the other hand, estimate VCI strength at somewhere between 55,000 to 70,000. The discrepancy between US and South Vietnamese estimates reflects, at least in part, a broader US definition of the VCI, which includes categories like couriers and suppliers, who may or may not be fully committed to the Viet Cong, and work for them only part time. The South Vietnamese apparently include only those holding full-time positions, such as party administrators, members of party cells, and covert agents.

VCI strength is believed to have fluctuated greatly since late 1970. Membership declined during 1971 and 1972,

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in early 1972, prior to the Communist spring offensive, there was a major recruitment effort that was probably somewhat successful. VCI strength almost certainly declined again as a result of the spring offensive, particularly in view of the widespread arrests by the South Vietnamese.

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There are numerous indications that the Communists believe they are politically weak, and they have been putting new emphasis on VCI recruitment since the signing of the cease-fire agreement in January. They have reportedly lowered party membership criteria in order to tap the population in areas that they gained access to after their 1972 offensive. In addition, North Vietnam has been sending down cadre to flesh out the VCI, and many of the 5,000-6,000 infiltrators [redacted] this year are believed to be civilian political and economic specialists. Some of these specialists were formerly residents of South Vietnam's northernmost provinces who fled North during the 1972 offensive, or military "regroupees" or their families who went North after 1954. Others are reported to be native northerners going South in advisory roles.

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The Communists concede that much needs to be done to rebuild their political apparatus in the South and that the process will not be a short or easy one. Recent directives have stated that Viet Cong administrations in "liberated areas" will be brought up to full strength before efforts are undertaken to build up the apparatus in contested and government-controlled areas. The Communists recognize that they have become increasingly divorced from the bulk of the population and are trying to offset this by repopulating the liberated zones with people from the North and building "showcase" villages to attract settlers from the South. They express confidence that these measures will serve both to populate Communist-held lands and to rejuvenate the VCI over the long run.

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Government Fields Strong Senate Slates [redacted]

President Thieu seems likely soon to gain firm control over the Senate, the only official body in which his non-Communist opponents have considerable strength. Its members are now almost evenly divided

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between pro- and anti-government forces. Government-backed candidates are heavily favored to win when 31 of the 60 Senate seats come up for election next August.

Voters will elect two out of four slates of candidates currently in the race. Two of the lists are composed of prominent members of Thieu's Democracy Party and other well known pro-government personalities. The other two contain little known individuals whose political orientation is not entirely clear. Some opposition figures are charging that they represent no more than a government-contrived show of competition.

The country's main independent and opposition groups are sitting out the election. Some were convinced that they had no chance against Thieu's well-organized political machinery and others were unable to agree on slates by the filing deadline last weekend.

Thieu has indicated that the Senate election is an important part of his long-range plan for consolidating his political position, suggesting that he does not anticipate any early political settlement with the Communists. He evidently believes that, with a strong majority in the Senate, he can put through certain constitutional amendments that will enable him to strengthen his hand politically.

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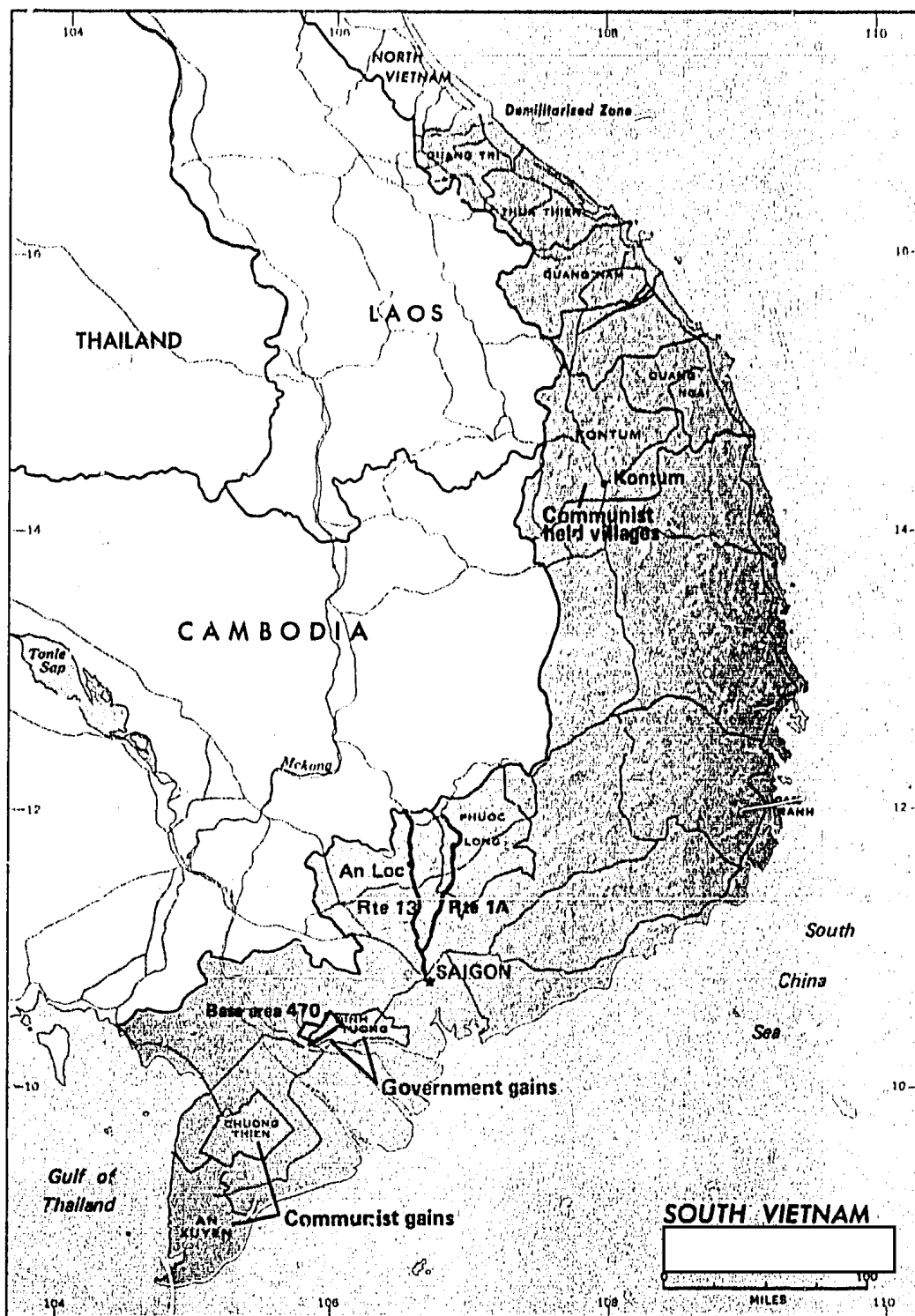
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"New" Cease-Fire Taking Hold?

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There were some last minute efforts to improve local positions as the new cease-fire went into effect over the weekend, but neither side attempted a major land grabbing campaign. The government had received numerous reports that the Communists would carry out limited operations, especially in the

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southern two thirds of the country, and much of the fighting that did occur was in these provinces. South Vietnamese forces were not only on alert but also conducted spoiling operations in several areas to preempt possible Viet Cong moves and acquire a few eleventh hour gains of their own.

By mid-week, the levels of military activity had returned to a low level. Some increased action is continuing in the delta, primarily light Communist shellings and ground probes. The Communists have made some gains there in An Xuyen and Chuong Thien provinces, eliminating a number of government outposts near Communist supply lines and base areas. On the government side, South Vietnamese troops have established a presence in a long-time Viet Cong base area of the northern delta and have pushed back some Communist forces in Dinh Tuong Province. North of Saigon, the Communists were able to thwart government efforts to reopen Route 13 to An Loc, but the government did open up an overland link to Phuoc Long Province to military traffic.

The Communists registered their greatest success in the highlands, where North Vietnamese forces are still holding two villages they captured 10 days ago a few miles west of Kontum City. A sizable government effort to recapture the villages has made only limited progress. Fighting has now slackened in the area and the Communists have made no further moves toward the provincial capital. Earlier reports had indicated that the Communists were after a strip of land to serve as a buffer between government territory and a major storage complex they have established in western Kontum Province.

In the northern provinces, most of the fighting is in Quang Ngai and Quang Nam provinces. Government units in these provinces are still trying to extend their defenses closer to the Communist-held foothills but are encountering heavy artillery and mortar fire. In the far north, military activity in Thua Thien and Quang Tri provinces has fallen off to the lowest level in several months.

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CAMBODIA

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Students, Teachers, and the  
Government

Phnom Penh's students and teachers, who earlier this year staged strikes and other forms of protest against government economic policies and poor living conditions continue to lie low politically. They are still feeling the effects of the government crackdown on the opposition carried out after the 17 March bombing attack on Lon Nol's residence and a violent incident the same day that involved students, teachers, and some Cambodian Army Troops. Several student and teacher leaders were arrested, others went into hiding, and still others are said to have fled Phnom Penh and to have joined the insurgents. The closure of the schools for most of the month of April and the government's ban on demonstrations or any other type of "public gathering," under the state of emergency decree, have further dampened political activities among students and teachers and contributed to their present apathy.

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[redacted] the teachers are still badly divided and demoralized. The so-called "intellectual" faction blames the "government" faction for fomenting the 17 March demonstration and for the subsequent wave of government repression. Most of their energy since then has been spent in attempts to locate missing instructors. Although there has been some desultory talk of demonstrations for price reductions and academic freedom, the teachers generally favor Prime Minister In Tam's new government.

For their part, the students reportedly have adopted a "wait and see" attitude toward the government. The main student organization, the Khmer Republic Student Association (KRSA), has met only

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irregularly since March, and it too has devoted most of its efforts to locating missing student leaders. The association heartily welcomed the departure of the President's brother, Lon Non, and generally approves the make-up of the new cabinet. As for the war, some students believe the fighting must stop immediately and negotiations must begin if Cambodia is to survive.

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